In the claims:

Following is a complete set of claims as amended with this Response.

1. (Previously Presented) A system comprising:

multiport circuitry having a plurality of ports to interconnect a plurality of computers in a network;

a plurality of network communications cable dispensing devices; and a plurality of network communications cables each communications cable having a first portion and a second portion, the first portion of the communications cable having an extremity including a first connector adapted to be coupled to one of the ports of the multiport circuitry, the second portion of the communications cable being extendible from and retractable into a cable dispensing device and having an extremity including a second connector adapted to be coupled to one of the computers.

2. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the multiport interconnecting circuitry includes a network switching circuit.

3. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the second portion of the communications cable is retractable into the cable dispensing device under a spring load.

4. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein:

the communications cable comprises flat, Category 5 compliant LAN cable including two twisted wire pairs; and

the connector at the extremity of each of the first and second portions of the communications cable comprises an RJ-45 modular plug.

5. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, further comprising a combined power/network cable for connecting the multiport circuitry to a local area network and to a source of electrical power.

6. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the multiport circuitry includes a connector for coupling the system to a second network communications system in daisy chain fashion.

7. (Original) A system, as defined in claim 1, in which:

the cable dispensing devices are removable latched in place in the system.

8-25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) A LAN cable dispensing device comprising:

a casing; and

a flat, Category 5 compliant LAN cable having a first portion and a second portion, the first portion of the LAN cable being fixed relative to the casing and having an extremity including a first RJ-45 modular plug and the second portion of the LAN cable being extendible from and retractable under spring load into the casing and having an extremity including a second RJ-45 plug;

wherein the casing includes a surface for receiving the second RJ-45 modular plug when the second portion of the LAN cable is fully retracted; and

the second RJ-45 modular plug includes a shock absorber for engaging said casing surface.

27. (Currently Amended) The cable dispensing device of claim 26, wherein the shock absorber comprises a resilient pad ~~:~~

~~the casing includes a surface for receiving the second RJ-45 modular plug when the second portion of the LAN cable is fully retracted; and~~

~~the second RJ-45 modular plug includes a shock absorber for engaging said casing surface~~.

28. (Previously Presented) The cable dispensing device of claim 26, wherein:

the casing includes a top surface; and

a handle projects from the top surface to facilitate lifting of the dispensing device.

29. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a housing having a base including a side wall and defining a plurality of internal wells, the side wall of the base defining a plurality of client computer ports, each client port communicating with one of the wells; and

a plurality of standard, modular LAN jacks mounted in the housing and corresponding in number to the number of recesses, each LAN jack being adapted to receive a standard modular LAN plug; and

wherein the network communication cable dispensing devices are removably mounted within each of the wells;

wherein the first portion of the communications cable is fixed relative to the cable dispensing device;

a standard modular LAN plug adapted to be received by one of the LAN jacks; and

wherein the second connector comprises a standard modular LAN plug adapted to be received by a corresponding jack on one of the computers

30. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 29, wherein the interconnection circuitry comprises a LAN switch, and the standard modular LAN jacks and plugs are of the RJ-45 type.

31. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 29 wherein the multiport interconnection circuitry further includes a port adapted to be connected to the multiport interconnection circuitry of a cascaded network communications system.

32. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 29, further comprising:

a combined power/LAN cable having a first set of conductors for connecting the multiport interconnection circuitry to a source of electrical power and a second set of conductors for carrying network signals between the system and the LAN.

33. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 29, wherein:

the housing includes a cover having an outer surface;

the multiport circuitry includes light emitters for indicating the status of the computer ports; and

the cover carries light pipes positioned relative to the light emitters so as to transmit light from the light emitters to the outer surface of the cover to provide a visual indication to a user of client port status.

34. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 29, wherein each cable dispensing device includes an upper surface carrying a handle facilitating removal of the device from the associated well.

35. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 29, wherein the second connector includes a resilient pad for absorbing shock resulting from the sudden release of the second portion of the cable from an extended position.

36. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the communications cables comprise:

a first group of conductors comprising two twisted wire pairs for transmitting Ethernet LAN signals, the first connector being adapted to be connected to an Ethernet LAN;

a second group of conductors extending generally parallel with the first group of conductors extending generally parallel with the first group of conductors and comprising two twisted wire

pairs for transmitting electrical power, the second group of conductors having a first end and a second end, the first end of the second group of conductors being adapted to be connected to a source of electrical power;

wherein the second connector comprises an insulative jacket enclosing the first and second groups of conductors; and

an RJ-45 modular connector terminating the second end of the second group of conductors, the RJ-45 connector having at least eight contact positions, the conductors of the first group of conductors being connected to a first group of four of the contact positions of the RJ-45 connector and the conductors of the second group of conductors being connected to a second group of four of the contact positions of the RJ-45 connector.

37. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 36, further comprising a first EMI/RFI shield enclosing the first group of conductors.

38. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 37, further comprising a second EMI/RFI shield surrounding the first shield, the second group of conductors being disposed between the first and second shields.

39. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 36, wherein the RJ-45 modular connector has ten contact positions 1-10, the conductors of the first group of conductors being connected to contact positions 1-4 and the conductors of the second group of conductors being connected to contact positions 7-10.

40. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 39, wherein intermediate contact positions 5 and 6 of the RJ-45 connector are devoid of electrical contacts to provide electrical isolation between the first and second groups of conductors.

41. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 36, wherein the first connector comprises a second RJ-45 modular connector terminating the second group of conductors at the first end thereof, the second RJ-45 connector having at least eight contact positions, the conductors of the first group of conductors being connected to a first group of four of the contact positions of the second RJ-45 connector and the conductors of the second group of conductors being connected to a second group of four of the contact positions of the second RJ-45 connector.

42. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 41, wherein the second RJ-45 connector has ten contact positions 1-10, the conductors of the first group of conductors being connected to contact positions 1-4 and the conductors of the second group of conductors being connected to contact positions 7-10.

43. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 42, wherein intermediate contact position 5 and 6 of the second RJ-45 connector are devoid of electrical contacts to provide electrical isolation between the first and second groups of conductors.

44. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 36, wherein the first group of conductors comprise Category 5 compliant conductors extending generally parallel with the second group of conductors, the system further comprising an insulative jacket enclosing the first and second groups of conductors;

an electrical power cord; and

a Category 5 compliant cable terminated with a second RJ-45 modular plug for connection to a LAN; and

an enclosure attached to the first and second groups of conductors, the electrical power cord and the Category 5 compliant cable, the enclosure containing:

conductors interconnecting the Category 5 compliant cable and the first end of the first group of conductors; and

a power supply interconnecting the power cord and the first end of the second group of conductors.